

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 28-48 are pending in the application. Please amend claims 28-43 as indicated in the following:

Claims 1-27 (Canceled).

Claim 28. (Currently Amended) A process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers comprising the steps of:

providing fibers to be ~~stretched in the form of a fiber sliver~~ drafted;

providing at least one fluid;

guiding the fluid to the fibers to be ~~stretched~~ drafted; and

entraining the fibers to be ~~stretched~~ drafted with the fluid so that the fluid exerts at least a portion of the tensile force necessary to cause ~~stretching~~ drafting of the individual fibers relative to other fibers in a ~~stretching~~ drafting direction.

Claim 29. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

moving the fibers so that certain sections of the fibers move faster than other sections of the fibers; and

entraining the fibers with the fluid at the faster moving sections.

Claim 30. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 29, wherein the entraining comprises a force component in the ~~stretching~~ drafting direction that causes inter-fiber cohesive forces of the fibers to be less than the total entraining tensile forces subjected to the fibers.

Claim 31. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

moving the fibers so that certain sections of the fibers move faster than other sections of the fibers; and

entraining the fibers with the fluid at the slower moving sections.

Claim 32. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 31, wherein at least one fluid exerts entraining force components opposite to the ~~stretching~~ drafting direction.

Claim 33. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

moving the fibers so that certain sections of the fibers move faster than other sections of the fibers; and

entraining the fibers such that the same fluid is used for restraining the slower fibers and for acceleration of the faster fibers.

Claim 34. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, wherein the fluid is selected from the group consisting of water, air, and a combination of water and air.

Claim 35. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the step of:

moving the fibers so that certain sections of the fibers move faster than other sections of the fibers by restraining a section of the fibers by a force action selected from the group consisting of mechanical, pneumatic, and electrostatic forces.

Claim 36. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the step of:

carding the fibers by making at least partial use of the same fluid that is used to entrain the fibers.

Claim 37. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, wherein before the fibers are ~~stretched~~ drafted by the fluid, the fibers are put into at least one configuration selected from the group consisting of loose fibers, fiber flocks, and a fiber band.

Claim 38. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

providing a ~~stretch~~ draft chamber in which to perform the step of entraining the fibers by the fluid so that the individual fibers are drafted relative to one another; and

introducing the fluid into the ~~stretch~~ draft chamber by use of an injector.

Claim 39. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the step of:

circulating the fluid in a recycle circuit.

Claim 40. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the step of:

treating the fibers with an additive for the lessening of cohesion between the fibers.

Claim 41. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

providing a ~~stretch~~ draft chamber in which to perform the step of entraining the fibers by the fluid; and

providing a spinning apparatus to spin the fibers before the step of entraining the fibers by the fluid; and

circulating the fluid between the spinning apparatus and the ~~stretch~~ draft chamber.

Claim 42. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the step of:

drying the fibers after the step of entraining the fibers by the fluid.

Claim 43. (Currently Amended) The process for providing ~~stretching~~ drafting forces to textile fibers of Claim 28, further comprising the step of regulating the flow of the fluid.

Claim 44. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for applying stretching forces to textile fibers comprising:

a stretch chamber having an inlet and an outlet in which fibers are stretched, the fibers are moved into, through, and out of the stretch chamber;

at least one fluid supplied to the stretch chamber which moves through the stretch chamber, the force of the fluid exerts a tensile force on the fibers which acts to stretch the fibers; and

a feed entry proximate to the stretch chamber for providing the at least one fluid to the stretch chamber.

Claim 45. (Withdrawn) The apparatus for applying stretching forces to textile fibers as set forth in Claim 44, wherein the stretch chamber has a plurality of stretch chamber sections which change in diameter in the direction of travel of the fibers.

Claim 46. (Withdrawn) The apparatus for applying stretching forces to textile fibers as set forth in Claim 44, wherein the inlet and outlet of the stretch chamber and the feed entry are provided with seals.

Claim 47. (Withdrawn) The apparatus for applying stretching forces to textile fibers as set forth in Claim 44, further comprising:

a transition hood in communication with the feed entry and the stretch chamber;

a fiber supply container in communication with the transition hood; and

a sealing arrangement that seals the transition hood and the fiber supply container.

Claim 48. (Withdrawn) The apparatus for applying stretching forces to textile fibers as set forth in Claim 44, further comprising at least one diversion vane for directing at least one of the fluids either in the same or opposite direction to the direction in which the fibers are stretched.